

THE GATEWAY

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Fight to kill Bill 40 fails to stop its passing

NATAIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

With the legislature slated to adjourn today, a controversial amendment to the Post-Secondary Learning Act passed after its third reading yesterday despite fierce opposition from student representatives.

The passing of Bill 40 has effectively removed tuition policy from legislation and placed it in regulation—allowing future policies to be established by cabinet without going through debate in the Legislature and removing the 30 per cent cap of operating expenditures that institutions can charge students for tuition.

"Bill 40 is in my view an affront to democracy," NDP Advanced Education Critic Raj Panhu said. "It certainly is a slap in the face of those who want matters as important as tuition fee policy to be enshrined in statute of the Legislature and not left to the whim and fancy of the Tory caucus."

On 9 May, with only ten days left in the spring session, Minister of Advanced Education, Denis Hérisson, surprised student leaders and university administration by introducing Bill 40 into the legislative assembly, despite no prior concrete indication.

Students' Union President Samantha Power explained how de-legislating tuition policy was never brought up during the year-long A Learning Alberta review process.

PLEASE SEE BILL 40 • PAGE 3



ALBERTA'S LEGISLATURE SHINES AT NIGHT With the Tory leadership race likely to take place in the fall, the closing of spring session brought with it a packed agenda. Only days after being introduced on the legislative floor, the controversial amendment to the Post-Secondary Act, Bill 40, passed after third reading.

KRYSTINA SULAYCO

APIRG back on track

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

After facing an emergency financial situation at the end of March, members of the student-run Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG) were relieved to receive the long-awaited disbursement of their dedicated fee on 26 April.

Instead of disbursing APIRG's dedicated fee unit (DFU) after registration had been confirmed in October 2006, the Students' Union Audit Committee chose to withhold the distribution pending a commitment from the organization to reduce the size of their contingency fund and deliver a plan of action stating how the remainder of the fund would be invested.

The contingency fund, worth over \$100 000, was created after APIRG's first DFU in 2001/02 was withheld until the end of the academic year due to various disagreements with the SU. Once the backlogged fees were received it's been used as a cash flow operating reserve.

However, last month, Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement (DIE) Board ruled in favor of APIRG's claim

that Audit Committee didn't have the jurisdiction to demand APIRG reduce the size of their contingency fund and the fees were promptly released.

But, as Audit Committee member Theresa Chapman explained, the current system has only been in place for two years and the initial aim to begin to take a closer look at DFUs was not intended to force APIRG into neat financial規劃。

"We wanted to know they weren't just storing a whole bunch of cash, because then do they really need students' money?" Chapman asked.

However, subsequent comments made by members of Audit Committee, accusing APIRG of not following Generally Accepted Accounting Principles—a formal set of guidelines that provide a standardized framework for accounting practices—further fueled the organization's frustration and prolonged miscommunication between APIRG and Audit Committee.

"There are ways that they're doing their bookkeeping that to us didn't seem kosher and didn't seem like a responsible or transparent way of using money," Chapman said.

PLEASE SEE APIRG • PAGE 4

Int'l students allowed off-campus jobs

SCOTT LILWALL
Deputy News Editor

For the first time, international students looking for work will be able to branch out and find jobs off campus, thanks to a new agreement between the federal and provincial governments.

While there's long been talk of a program allowing international students in Canada work off campus, it wasn't until April that the Off-Campus Work Permit Program for International Students became a concrete reality.

The program, a joint venture of between the provincial and federal governments, is designed to give international students important experience in the Canadian workforce, while at the same time providing a larger pool of potential employees for Alberta's worker-hungry economy.

To be eligible to work at an off-campus job, students must apply for a work permit through from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Unlike the work permits available to students after they have completed their program of study, this program doesn't require an offer of employment to apply, which allow students to get out

into the workforce sooner. After receiving the work permit, international students will be eligible to work at any job they desire, although the program does put a cap on the student's hours, to prevent the work from interfering with academic studies.

"The work permit will allow [international students] to work up to 20 hours a week during regular academic sessions, and up to 40 hours a week during regular breaks, [such as] winter or summer holidays and spring break," explained Sandra Zarate, manager of International Education and Intergovernmental Relations at Alberta Advanced Education, via e-mail.

Since the program's announcement by the Alberta government, administrators at the U of A's International Centre have been working to get the program ready in time for students to find employment for the summer break.

"It's the behind the scenes work that is a bit complicated. We're working out those details now. We're trying to get the interfaces we require... worked out. Once we get those worked out, we will send an e-mail to students to let them know that the program is up and running," explained Doug Weir, Director of International Student Services at the U of A. "And it will be running by June."

To be eligible for the program, international students must be a current full-time student at a participating postsecondary institution, like the U of A, with at least six of the past twelve months spent in full-time studies.

To remain in the off-campus work program, the student must maintain a satisfactory academic standing. Work permits can be valid up to 90 days after the student has completed their program of study.

Weir believes that the off-campus work program will be a great benefit to all parties involved.

"The key benefit for international students is the opportunity to gain the Canadian experience, experience off campus, and hopefully Canadian work experience. I think that international students have a lot to contribute to the Alberta workplace, especially as Alberta businesses are looking at markets outside of Alberta for their products. International students can bring a very valuable perspective to those workplaces."

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Rest in peace, Dose

We'll miss your inspirational stories and thought-provoking ringtones. Actually, check that, no we won't.

OPINION ON PAGE 5



Erect flags, phalluses

Lacks plot and direction, but at least *Battle in Heaven* has full-frontal nudity, according to Edmon Rota.

A&E, PAGE 10

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APIRG DFU released after months of miscommunication

APIRG* CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"[But] it was really bad wording. There were problems with their bookkeeping, but the title that was put on it was a problem," Chapman explained.

According to Yewchuk, APIRG's audited statements only showed their spending for each individual fiscal year, but their internal statements included things such as grants and long-term projects. Internally, these funds weren't considered accessible, though APIRG's audited statement didn't reflect this distinction. This lead Audit Committee to question the shift in money from one year to another.

"You can't use your receipts from a different year to make your budget even out," Chapman said.

To add to the difficulties, Eugene Lee, APIRG's Financial Coordinator, resigned in early March. The position wasn't filled again until 30 March 2006, when Rose Tewchuk took over the responsibility of overseeing the organization's finances. Yewchuk

explained that the misunderstanding stemmed from the transition from one type of accounting practice to another.

"We had this internal document saying this is how we allocate our funds, but it didn't exactly match up with our audited statements, because our audited statements only say how much money went out, so that was the confusion there," Yewchuk clarified.

"[But] it's something that we're working with our auditor on, just so that there isn't any possibility for that type of confusion in future years," she added.

Provisions have also been put in place to prevent future misunderstandings between Audit Committee and DFU recipients. On every external DFU board, there's one Council member, who is now required to attend all Audit Committee meetings concerning that DFU. They will also receive any communication between Audit Committee and that particular DFU.

And although APIRG's 2006/07 DFU has now been disbursed, Audit Committee has plans to continue monitoring the organization's use of the money, as outlined by DFU board.

"It's not like we're saying, 'Okay here's your money and then we're never going to talk to you about it again,'" Chapman said.



MATT FREHNER

ROSE YEWCUK APIRG's Financial Coordinator explains past fiscal confusion.

"mess," Alderson acknowledged.

"Hopefully this coming year it'll go a lot more smoothly with Audit Committee. We'd like to improve relations because this isn't fair for anyone, and it reflects poorly both on Audit Committee and APIRG," he concluded.

NEWS BRIEFS

Compiled by Edmon Rotea and
Scott Lilkall

CONSTRUCTION AT V-WING

According to the laws of gravity, what goes up must come down—especially if it's the demolition of V-Wing and the Avadi Bhata Physics Lab to make way for the new Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Sciences (CCIS).

Demolition of V-Wing is expected to commence this July and will continue until September, with demolition of the Physics building to follow in September and last until January 2007.

The V-Wing and Physics buildings were opened in 1960 as part of the Physical Sciences Centre. A number of continuing issues precipitated the demand for a new structure; along with the need for more instructional and research space, hallway traffic congestion during class breaks has been a persistent issue. Electrical, mechanical and ventilation problems

have also raised concerns.

While the destruction of V-Wing includes the loss of over 1828 lecture seats—making lecture hall space a premium on campus—existing offices, laboratories, research facilities and classes will all be relocated to nearby structures, including the Civil Engineering Building, which is currently undergoing interior renovations.

The PCL Construction company will formally take possession of the V-Wing and Physics buildings on 8 June, in order to vacate and conduct a hazardous materials abatement of both buildings and make preparations for their demolition.

ACA GRANTS IN BIODIVERSITY

With the ever-increasing importance of protecting and preserving the province's ecosystems, demand for environmentally based research and funding is growing. The Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) Grants in Biodiversity allows graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to further their research efforts into Alberta's native grasslands.

This year's 19 recipients, 13 of whom are from the U of A, will share the grants, worth \$200,000 in total—with the average payout worth more than \$10,000 to a maximum of \$20,000. This year's studies will investigate topics ranging from the nectar production in orchid plants to the population sustainability of mountain goats.

While the program is primarily funded by revenue generated from the sale of hunting and fishing licences, endowments from the private sector and other benefactors are also supporting the project. Funding and research efforts will also be used to support government research programs and non-governmental organizations concerned with

put over \$2.75 million into graduate students' projects by paying for all non-salaried project-based expenses, including travel, research equipment and laboratory supplies.

The program—which funds research in the fields of environmental and conservation biology, biodiversity and ecology—has supported research in many areas, from wood frog movements and climate change to the invasion of non-native plants into Alberta's native grasslands.

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Alberta's environment.

CHARTER DAY COMMEMORATED

While students and staff prepare to celebrate 100 years of postsecondary education at the University of Alberta in 2008, May marked the centennial anniversary of a lesser-known milestone in the institution's history.

In order to celebrate the passing of the University Act signed into law 100 years ago, 9 May 2006 has been designated Charter Day. The law, signed in by then-entrepreneur-governor George Headley Vicars Buleya, officially established the province's first university and outlined values that became the foundation of U of A policy, such as maintaining a secular educational environment, and guaranteeing full access to education for women, which was unusual for the time.

Following the signing of the University Act, construction of University facilities and hiring of staff began. After this necessary work was completed, the University officially opened to students in 1908, offering classes through the Faculty of Arts and Science, the University's sole faculty at the time.

STREETERS

The Oilers made the playoffs and suddenly everyone and their dog watches hockey.

What's been your craziest fan experience this playoff run?



Jeremy Hurtubise
Arts II



Tara Fulton
PhD Candidate



Glen Shoemaker
PhD Candidate



Alan Dugas
Arts III

Nothing that extravagant, just probably screaming at my TV. When they scored that goal in triple overtime, I woke up my whole house because I was yelling at the TV downstairs. Other than that, nothing too exciting.

They take your ID on your way out of the bar and then I came back in and they didn't have mine anymore. And so some other girl had it and we had to spend half an hour trying to find the girl in the mad rush, right as [the Oilers] scored in the third overtime period.

I almost got a ticket for climbing a tree on Whyte. I tried to lose the cop in the crowd but he found me and said, "Don't climb the tree," which was exciting, I guess.

Friday night Whyte Ave after game four. People were climbing trees and just going down Whyte Ave high-fiving each other. A couple thousand people on the street—it was pretty crazy. People in trees was pretty crazy too—that and dogs with Oilers jerseys.

Compiled and photographed by Natalie Climenhaga and Matt Frehner

De-legislation of tuition removes insurance: SU

BILL 40 • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"It's a little bit concerning as to why we had an extensive year-long consultation process if this is going to be the end result," Power said.

SU leaders from the University of Alberta joined with their counterparts from the Universities of Calgary and Lethbridge to call on the Minister to withdraw Bill 40 and keep Alberta's tuition policy enshrined in legislation, outlining the potential consequences of having tuition policy established without public debate.

However Herard maintained that no future tuition policies would be created without consultation with all concerned parties.

"There are no policies that would ever go to cabinet without information relating to the stakeholders and how they felt about it," Herard assured.

"I think the students should see this as an opportunity for continuous improvement," he said. "Students shouldn't be concerned because they're going to get their say one way or another."

But, according to Liberal Advanced Education critic Dave Taylor, the introduction of Bill 40 came without any prior warning to concerned parties, which signifies a lack of commitment to consultation.

"[Herard] talks about wanting to consult stakeholders, but what did he just do? He brought this bill that none of the stakeholders knew was coming," Taylor said.

"He blindsided everybody in the province of Alberta who is strictly affected by this bill: the students, parents, faculty, the college and university administration and anybody else with an interest in the postsecondary system."

Earlier in the week, both Panu and

Taylor had vowed to try to kill Bill 40 on the floor of the legislature or move forward with an amendment that would re-enforce the tuition policy into the statutes of this province; however, their attempts failed to sway the Tory majority.

But Herard defended the decision to remove tuition policy from legislation, prior to the passing of Bill 40, stating it would provide the enabling legislation required to adjust the tuition policy in a timely manner without having to wait for the long process of legislation.

"Students shouldn't be concerned because they're going to get their say one way or another."

DENIS HERARD,
ADVANCED EDUCATION MINISTER

"I think there is another way to look at this. I think you have to look at it as a positive because when you have something like that in regulation it means that you can react very quickly to market conditions and also it's an opportunity for continuous improvement," Herard said.

According to SU Vice-President (External) Dave Cournoyer, the release of a new tuition policy is expected within a couple of days. Herard had speculated that student representatives would welcome this new policy.

"[It] will be a lot more friendly from the point of view that, [and] I've already said it publicly, that I guess it'll be essentially based on some CPI measure which is understandable to everybody," Herard said.

However, Power questioned the need to remove tuition policy from legislation in order to create such a policy.

"Increasing tuition solely by CPI can be done within the realm of [the previous] legislation or by making a slight amendment instead of completely de-legislating the tuition policy," she said.

"[And] regardless of the policy the minister releases because it's in regulation students have no assurance that the tuition policy will be the same in six months," Cournoyer pointed out.

And while critics of Bill 40 had hypothesized the potential consequences of removing the tuition cap from legislation, U of A Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Dr Carl Amrhein, maintained that there will be no immediate threat of the University's tuition skyrocketing.

"The 30 percent [cap] has never constrained the University of Alberta so whether the government has the 30 percent rule or not is at this point in our history irrelevant because we've never gone above 26 percent. Nor would we expect to get above 26 percent even under the [previous] policy," Amrhein explained.

"[The administration] has taken a slightly different position on the words tuition policy. What we want is a university funding framework that recognizes the amount of funding we need to do the job we're being asked to do," he added. "The government needs to decide what the appropriate balance is between tuition and operating grant."

Despite Bill 40's passing, Cournoyer maintained that the SU would remain vocal regardless of the direction of the new tuition policy.

"We will be pushing the Minister to re-legislate the tuition policy."

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Advanced Education Minister, Denis Herard ready for results

CHLOÉ FEDIO
Managing Editor

Denis Herard was just another Conservative backbencher until the ambition to join the party's leadership race left several provincial minister positions open, landing him in the spot of Advanced Education Minister. And though Herard may not have made headlines in education issues before he was sworn into cabinet on April 6, he's ready to pick up where former minister Dave Hancock left off, and in some cases, where he himself left off.

"I guess what I'm saying, without sounding like I'm bragging here, is I've been able to get some things done over the years," says Herard. "I hit the ground running, and for those who think that nothing will get done, they just have to watch me."

Herard, MLA for Calgary-Egmont, has been in government since 1993, and since that time has been involved in education, sitting on—and sometimes chairing—various committees, such as the Standing Policy Committees on Education and Employment and the Information and Communications Technology Advisory Committee.

With a background in technology—he operated a telecommunications and computer software business in Calgary before becoming an MLA—Herard has played a major role in fusing technology with

education.

"I think you see my vision on the ground today, and it's called SuperNet," Herard says, adding that the project was initiated six years ago.

Alberta SuperNet was completed in September 2005, aspiring to connect every school, library, business, community and government agency, and to provide high-speed Internet access to remote and rural areas in the province where such services are lacking.

**"How many hours
has it been that I've
been since I'm the
Minister? And it's
been a pretty steep
learning curve."**

DENIS HERARD, MINISTER OF
ADVANCED EDUCATION

"The main reason for [SuperNet] and the thing that actually sold all my colleagues on it was that it would be the tool that would level the playing field between urban and rural student. I really hold out an awful lot of hope for what that technology brings to Albertans," he says.

Despite the active leadership race in his party, Herard is adamant that the government won't get distracted

and will follow through on their promise to create the most affordable tuition policy in the province—a pledge made by Premier Ralph Klein, who is on his way out.

"I can tell you that we have to act soon in order to make regulations that will affect the 2007 tuition policy," Herard says. "We have to act. The point is that there's no ifs, ands or buts here."

He went on to explain that though he wasn't intimately involved in the postsecondary review, which has been underway for over a year, the public consultation is what really matters, and will continue to drive the review.

"It's more important to see what it is that Albertans told us they want than what my view is," Herard says. "How many hours has it been that I've been since I'm the Minister? And it's been a pretty steep learning curve."

Herard attended Collège Saint Jean back when it was still a boys school, completing a bilingual education, and holds the U of A's French faculty close to his heart.

"Collège Saint Jean is a very fond memory for me. At the time, I thought it was probably the worst thing in the world to be there, but in retrospect I think it was a great formation, and I think formation speaks to more than education; that speaks to the soul.

"To me, it's a great jewel that we have in Alberta."

Research Fund shows commitment to the Arts: VP

MIKE GARVIE
News Writer

The recent creation of a new funding program, which aims to give a much-needed financial boost to arts and social sciences at the University of Alberta, is a welcomed announcement for many faculty, students and staff. There are some, however, that believe there's still a need for more resources.

Last month, U of A President Indira Samarasekera and Vice-President (Research) Gary Kachanoski announced the creation of the Killam Research Fund, a \$1.5 million investment to foster more research in humanities, social sciences and fine arts.

Kachanoski admitted the fund doesn't represent a lot of money, but contended that its creation shows a commitment to the Faculty of Arts that hasn't been seen before.

"It's a start, and we've said to the faculties that it's a cost-sharing program and that we would like to do more of these. We will be working with our counterparts across Canada, hoping that some of the language that's in the current budget will result in some more concrete research dollars for the Arts," Kachanoski said.

He was also pleased that Samarasekera is pursuing a third endowment for the Arts, equivalent to the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research and Alberta Ingenuity.

Although the Killam Fund is certainly an acknowledgement that Arts research is important, Dean of Arts Daniel Woolf argued there's still a lack of funding in other areas within the faculty when compared to

engineering, sciences, and medical research.

"It's not a criticism of those areas," Woolf said. "But I think there's a sense that somehow research in the Arts is really cheap. It's certainly much less expensive than running a big lab, but that being said, we certainly have people on our side of campus doing more expensive elaborate research, and there simply has not been the support for that," he explained.

Woolf also expressed concern that while the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), for which some of the funding has been earmarked, represents approximately 60 per cent of university faculty across Canada yet only receives 13 per cent of federal tri-council grant dollars.

While funding in research is important, there are things the Killam Fund can't do, such as put teaching assistants. As in the classroom, hire professors or address the growing need to bring in more graduate students, Woolf pointed out.

"We need more funding for graduate students across the board at the University. I don't see us letting in fewer undergraduates, but we would like to dramatically increase the number of graduates in the next few years," he said.

Woolf hopes that projects like the Killam Fund will make the U of A more competitive in keeping undergraduate students at the institution as they continue in their postsecondary education.

"That will require not just more funding for more students, but more competitive funding because we tend to lose good students to offers from other institutions."



JOSHUAULT

OLD ARTS, NEW FUND Funding for research in Arts and Social Sciences is on the rise.

KILLAM RESEARCH FUND

Where it comes from:

The \$1.5 million Killam Research Fund breaks down in to:

\$1 million in new funding per year from the University of Alberta;

\$200 000 per year from the existing Humanities, Fine Arts and Social Sciences grant program;

\$210 000 a year from VP Research office.

Where it's going:

\$800 000 of the fund goes to the Cornerstone Grant Program;

\$700 000 is allocated by the VP Research portfolio for initiatives such as the Roger S Smith Undergraduate Research Awards. Some of the money is also earmarked for Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) programs like Community-University Research Alliances (CURA).

COUNCIL FORUM

Compiled by Scott Lilwall

Students' Council meets every second Tuesday in the Council Chambers in University Hall at 6pm. Council meetings are open to all students. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 30 May.

AMANDA HENRY PRESENTS

The first business on the order paper was a presentation of the Students' Union's Academic Plan by VP (Academic) Amanda Henry. The plan was requested by the University's administration, which is looking for input as they plot the course of U of A's teaching and research over the coming years. Henry's presentation focused on improving teaching quality, the quality of education and the general undergraduate experience. Some of the suggestions that Henry made included expanding instructor evaluations to provide more comprehensive feedback, as well as developing new surveys to get a better picture of student opinion on a variety of different subjects. The plan also calls for more resources dedicated to non-traditional education. Finally, the Academic Plan calls for a strong emphasis on teaching resources over research funding, to create a university experience that's more rewarding for undergraduate students.

The SU's plan will be sent to the administration, along with recommendations from GSA and other stakeholders.

ASKED AND ANSWERED

During question period the Executive announced that the presentation of their goals for their tenure would be set for 10-11 June. As well, it was stated that a taskforce had been formed to look in to the plan on the financial situation of the University Health Centre.

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CAMPUS CRIME BEAT

Compiled by Scott CBourgeois

MY CAR GOT TOWED, GOT SOME CHANGE FOR A CAB?

On 21 April, Campus Security received a report of a male soliciting people for money on campus. This subject has been seen several times before on campus asking for money. He's described as Caucasian, about 5'6", 40-50 years of age wearing a suit jacket, dark pants, black briefcase and black coat. The subject uses the story that his vehicle was towed and he needs money for a cab but his wife doesn't have a credit card to scan money from good Samaritans. If you see this money-seeking man, please call Campus Security at 492-5050.

OH GREAT! NOW I DON'T HAVE A STOLEN RIDE HOME!

After a series of break-ins at the Humanities building and numerous thefts from that area, Campus Security arrested two individuals. On 30 April, at around 4pm, 50+ members responded to the second floor of the building. Upon arrival a male and a female were seen in the area. At first, the female appeared to have a legitimate reason for being in the area and reported that she just saw a male with a blue backpack leaving the area. The male was located a short time later waiting in a vehicle in front of Humanities. When questions about his presence, the man informed members that he was waiting to pick up his friend. The vehicle the male was sitting in appeared to be tampered with. The male was placed under arrest.

At this point, the female exited Humanities and appeared upset that she no longer had a ride home. Further investigation of the female by Campus Security revealed that she was in possession of stolen University property. She was subsequently placed under arrest and released into the custody of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS). The investigation continues.

SO, THAT'S WHERE THOSE MISSING SEX TOYS GOT TO

On 3 May, a 50-year-old male with no University affiliation arrived at Campus Security Services and attempted to claim some property from the lost and found. The male was identified and trespassing from campus when it was determined that the bag he collected contained items of a sexual nature.

The very next day, Campus Security members caught sight of a suspicious male near HUB mall. It was soon determined that this was the very same lost-and-found looter that had been seen the day before. The male was arrested for trespassing and released into the custody of the EPS.

NO, SERIOUSLY, I WAS RIDING BOTH THESE BIKES, OFFICER.

At 7:30am on 7 May, Campus Security was called to the Michener Park residence. A resident had reported that an unknown male was in the process of stealing his bicycle. When a 50+ member arrived, the lurker was found to be in possession of two bicycles, including the one that had been reported stolen.

The subject was informed he was going to be detained, at which point he resisted the arrest. The resistant male was quickly restrained. EPS was called, and took the male into police custody and charged him with theft.

I'M JUST HOLDING THESE BOLT CUTTERS FOR A FRIEND.

There has been a rash of bicycle thefts at the University recently, although luckily, one incident resulted in the recovery of a stolen bicycle. On 15 May, at around 3am Campus Security responded to a report of a male with a backpack riding through Quad on a bike. The male was asked for identification and upon searching for his ID in his backpack in doing so, he revealed a pair of yellow bolt-cutters. Campus 50+ identified the male as being previously trespassed from campus. He was promptly arrested.

Upon searching the male a knife was located in his pants pockets. The serial number of the bike that the male was riding was checked, and it revealed that the bike was indeed stolen. The EPS attended and took custody of the subject.

OPINION

Tuition debate still needed

LAST NIGHT, AS THE SUN SET on Alberta's Legislature building, the Conservative government's spring session came to a close, along with any assurance of a free and open debate on tuition policy in this province.

With the passing of Bill 40, the Postsecondary Learning Act has been substantially amended. And by amended, I mean repealed, torn up and basically shut upon. The bill, which moved decisions about tuition policy from legislation to regulation—or, in other words, gave the cabinet ultimate authority over the direction policy can take without ratification from the Legislative Assembly—might look like a good idea now, but may have unsavoury consequences in the long term.

As Advanced Education Minister Denis Herard has assured us, this move will allow the Conservatives to push forward with the momentum they've gained from the year-long postsecondary review while legislature isn't in session. This is critical if we are to get a new tuition policy for 2007, as a Conservative leadership race will mean no fall session. But as the government's critics have been all too willing to point out, this lack of legislative accountability may lead to whimsical changes that aren't favourable to the majority of students.

Admittedly, the prospect of the government doing something so drastic is a tad unrealistic. At this point, it's not a practical debate, but rather a philosophical one: the Conservatives have no business making high-impact decisions about a social good like postsecondary education without the consultation of the public. The institution is meant to serve. I'm not denying that Mister Herard may have the best of intentions, but to say that this is "what students want" is entirely misleading.

It's clear from Monday's press conference on Bill 40, held by numerous student organizations along with the two opposition parties, that students are very concerned about leaving the future of postsecondary tuition policy in the hands of a select few Conservative MLAs without any public consultation. The fact that the Conservatives and Mister Herard have been largely silent on their specific plans speaks to the lack of weight they put on fostering informed debate among those who are impacted by this policy. If Herard was doing what students wanted, he would have told us a bit about what he was planning.

Finally, the muckraking that has surrounded Bill 40 blinds everyone to the real, nuanced issues facing postsecondary education. It's irresponsible for the government to suggest that a change in tuition policy will move us in any substantial way towards the supposed Conservative dream of the most affordable, accessible and exemplary education system in the country.

Tuition is but one of many factors that affect accessibility and quality. For instance, we could look at increasing need-based scholarships and bursaries as a way to ensure access, or we could discuss innovative ways to promote research and attract faculty members as a way of promoting a quality institution. These prolonged discussions fall to the wayside when a government is seeking public favour or re-election.

The government's promise that Bill 40 is to our ultimate advantage is at best a red herring. Students would do well to keep a close eye on the Conservatives as they begin building their tuition regulations, and be ready to place unflinching pressure on the government to move a substantial and equitable tuition policy back into legislation at the earliest opportunity.

MATT FREHNER
Editor-in-Chief

A fatal overdose

IN KEEPING WITH ITS STORIED TRADITION of late-breaking scoops, Dose, CanWest's ubiquitous daily shit-rag, has suddenly—if not unexpectedly—gone tits up. No one was more surprised, however, than Dose's own employees, who found themselves unemployed effectively immediately.

Apparently, selling its soul—and all journalistic integrity along with it—for such subversive marketing tactics as front-page ads and paid colour schemes didn't pay off.

ADAM GAUMONT
Opinion Editor

LETTERS

Kelly's knight in shining armour has arrived

I would like to state for a fact that chivalry is not dead (re: "Treat me like a princess, boys," 4 April). True gentlemen like me have no problems holding doors open or otherwise making an effort to woo a woman.

In the following issue of the Gateways (4 April), there were a handful of letters criticizing Kelly's supposed anti-feminist approach. Her words are not trying to reverse the hard work women's rights activists have gained for women around the world, nor to condemn social issues.

People, please read the entire article! The first half of it may sound anti-feminist, but the remainder explains how we as humans should be considerate to everyone and, among other things, hold the door open for people regardless of who they are. It's called common courtesy.

What's so wrong about wooing a girl that you like? Nothing. What's wrong with bringing her flowers if she likes them? Nothing. Not all of us are looking for a one-night-stand or booty partner. For all the fundamentalist feminists out there, I am not trying to crush women's rights. I'm just trying to treat a girl special.

There is also nothing wrong with wanting to dress up for a date to go somewhere special. Often the only time you would dress up would be for a wedding or funeral. A date is so much more fun (well, more fun than a funeral, anyway).

Finally, I have to say that all of you who responded to the article may have taken it too personally. Kelly's article was not an attack on your person, just a comment on the way some men (and women) behave. You don't have to be vicious about it!

On behalf of all gentlemen around the world, and to uphold the honour that is chivalry, let me buy you a rose, Miss Kelly.

ERWIN FUNG
U of A Alumnus

Campbell-Lemire; 2; Pseudo-feminists: 0

This letter is regarding Nina Varsava's article "Discriminatory workshops and programs do women no favours" (4 April) and Michelle Kelly's article "Treat me like a princess, boys" (4 April).

First of all, Miss Kelly (or it Ms.),

you are completely right: the feminists really screwed up everything for us. If it wasn't for them, I'd be embroidering a tea towel for my trunk of wedding preparations right now while wondering why my dad said no to Tom's proposal last year.

At this rate, with my 23rd birthday fast approaching, my youth would be quickly running out and no one would want me in a couple of years. If they wouldn't have fought and suffered so much that I could attend university, I wouldn't have so many damned choices facing me now, and life would be so much simpler!

If only I could be "courted" by



someone my father approved of and then given away to become financially dependent on and socially isolated by him. Really, without them, this letter and your original article would not exist, because we would be here at all.

But seriously, are you actually blaming a lack of gentlemen for the rise of sexism? As for the opening of doors, only radical feminists take it as "an attack on their abilities," as you so easily put it. The fact that old-fashioned values are dying off has more to do with society's need to evolve and progress than with women asking to have personal bank accounts and being allowed to say no when their husbands want sex.

I advise you, Miss Kelly, to take a Women's Studies class and educate yourself about feminism before you so readily accuse it of being the cause of your lack of dating success. Everyone wants to be treated nicely, but isn't it better that it comes from a place of respect rather than patronizing kindness?

As for Ms Varsava's article, has it not occurred to you that many women do need the extra help? Forgive my ensuing assumption, but the money you use to pay our extremely high tuition fees here was probably relatively easy for you to come by, it's from parents, loans or scholarships. Our worldview as university students tends to narrow when we forget that life off campus is rather different than life on it. Many people grow up in very difficult circumstances, be they financially so or abusive or both, and (especially women) are left believing that they are not worthy to try for bigger and better things.

Outreach programs and scholarships reserved exclusively for women simply recognize the imbalance that women still face in the workforce. The majority of high-salary positions are still held by men, and these programs are in place to encourage women to push their way up to the top instead of settling for clerical and secretarial positions.

After reading these articles, I'm beginning to fear that we as a society are regressing and forgetting what our grandmothers have fought for. At this rate, by the time my daughter enrolls in university, women's studies will mean learning how to sew and cook... if shell still be allowed to attend, that is.

JOZEL CAMPBELL-LEMIRE
Arts IV

Big C or small, Alberta's Conservatives have worn out their welcome

Jared Milne, in his woefully short-lived article "Conservative party's future depends on ethics and vision" (4 April), has, seemingly unbeknownst to himself, illustrated exactly what's wrong with politics and democracy in Alberta.

I can hardly argue with Milne's depiction of how destructive of a leader Klein has been for this province, but I must certainly do take exception to his dismal portrayal of the future of Albertan politics. There's far too little irony here for an opinion piece on the choice of conservatism offering no choice at all. Rather, there's one autocratic option, where our new leader gets to decide what branch of conservatism this province gets to endure for a new reign.

The Conservatives do not hold a monopoly on "the pioneer spirit of Alberta," and I for one have had enough Conservative rule for my life. Perhaps when they stop silencing alternatives and cease blasting as though they're the only legitimate voice, we'll begin to have a real democracy, one with debate, an opposition and respect for dissenting opinions. Only then will there be anything progressive about Alberta's government, even if still Conservative.

ADAM FERLAND
Science II

APRG not all skulls and crossbones, people

I am writing in response to the article "APRG teetering on the edge of bankruptcy" (4 April). I am a volunteer at the Women's Centre Collective in SUB, one of many student organizations on campus, and would like to attest to the support that APRG offers us.

As APRG's financial stability has been called into question, many small organizations such as ours are feeling the ripples of this effect. APRG has been a mentor organization for many working groups on campus, providing administration and resource support, as well as (and most importantly) a community of activism on campus.

APRG's open doors have helped us to develop our own resources, including a library for working groups dealing with obscure and under-researched issues in women's and queer studies. APRG has made itself available consistently through contact with its working members, sharing their own resources and offering guidance along the way.

I would ask the writers at the Gateway and members of the SU to consider the role of the Audit Committee—that is, to provide a history of its financial situation, report the facts, and to ensure that APRG is fulfilling its mandate. As a direct beneficiary of the community that APRG supports at the U of A, I can assure you that they do.

JOANN GRUNDY
Edmonton, AB

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, or e-mailed to gateway@gateway.ualberta.ca.

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I have seen the light—sunlight, that is

Believe it or not, life does exist beyond the comforting glow of television



MICHAEL LIU

television is people's dependence on it as their chief source of socialization. This is problematic because television, being a visual and temporal medium, entails passive viewing and uncritical thinking.

With newspaper articles, on the other hand, the information is usually more in-depth. More importantly, the activity of reading challenges us to interpret the information based on our own experiences. This is why two readers won't respond to a story the same way. This is also why we feel gripped by exciting storytelling; it's as if we're involved in the action ourselves.

Television, too, can put us where the action is—take the NHL playoffs, for instance. But unlike reading, the imagery and sensory details are already supplied in television. Your brain essentially remains passive throughout the channel-surfing. Unable to draw on personal or creative connections, it's only a matter of time before the brain falls into a coma-like state.

So what if television prevents me from thinking you ask. Can't I watch simply for pleasure? For a thrill or a hilarious joke? Right. The main problem with this attitude, aside from its naivete', is that such entertainment isn't as harmless as it may seem. With repeated exposure, viewers can often forget that television isn't reality—one that espouses certain economic and social ideologies as well. Television substitutes real life with a false consciousness, to use a rather jargonized expression.

It's possible, for instance, that an avid TV-watcher will derive some of his or

her ideas about femininity from a show such as *Martha Stewart Living*. Here, one is substituting seemingly harmless facts with purchasable commodities. In this sense, it's in television's best interests to commodify friends with *Friends*, music with MTV, and sex with *Sex and the City*.

Defenders of TV argue that having choice and freedom over what we watch ultimately justifies the medium. However, this line of reasoning overlooks the regulations and lobbying that confront mainstream networks. Often, the rating system and commercial interests determine programming more than individual choice.

Advertising too can play a larger role in consumer choice than we might like to think. Take tobacco: in the 1950s, the tobacco industry's lobbying was so powerful that health organizations were banned from expressing anti-smoking sentiments on the major TV networks. It was only after years of lawsuits that the portrayal of smoking became more regulated and responsible.

More freedom and choice are being offered now, but the situation is far from balanced. Ultimately, the television industry is neither neutral nor free. It is inherently ideological simply due to its ability to spread ideas to billions of people instantaneously.

So for the time being, television and I will coexist in peaceful isolation from one another. I recommend that everyone try this approach for themselves before coming to any conclusions. Real life is definitely worth it, especially with so many attractive summer students tanning around campus.

Dare to dream—and drop out of school



AMANDA TERMEER

"There's only one way to avoid being a perpetual consumer in society, striving to pay off debts to the government and the university, and that's to drop out. Dropping out is an act of courage, and is definitely revolutionary. In order to quit, an individual has to defy society and find new ways to become successful."

Although the university lifestyle can be great, there are also several negative aspects that can cause students to question their reasons for entering into academia.

Final exams, hangovers, pesky assignments, stress, nasty coffee addictions, severe financial debt, blood-shot eyes and sexually transmitted diseases can all leave students feeling lost and bitter—and, in the latter case, itchy and sore. This feeling often results in a "Withdraw" or "Fail," followed by some academic probation and a changed attitude.

Most students study, cram and do whatever else it takes to avoid failure. Less motivated ones scramble to hand in half-filled exams and half-hearted assignments. Then there are those who can't deal with the stress and simply drop out. But most students stick around—even if they hate school.

Many reconsider their motivations for attending postsecondary institutions at some point in their academic careers, though few actually go this far as this. This is for several reasons: for one, many students have a strong urge to impress their parents, whether they're educated or blue-collar. These students are still not independent enough to live for themselves, and seek encouragement from those around them.

Another popular reason for staying in school can be referred to as "natural

progression." Many high-school students are told by their counsellors that they're intelligent enough to be further educated. These counsellors rarely discuss other options with them, so high school students left feeling that university or college is the only possibility—other than the dreaded workforce, of course.

An education also gives future employees something to focus on. We've all heard that after we get our degree, success is sure to follow. This success, in turn, will allow for a fuller, prouder life. Meanwhile, student loans force graduates to enter the workforce to pay off their debt to society, thus improving the economy. We're being programmed to contribute to society, and not to ourselves.

There's also the financial aspect. After just two years of education, as much as \$20 000 will have been invested in a degree. In this sense, leaving school prematurely would be an enormous waste of money. After all, the university is a business, and students are its consumers.

As a result, postsecondary institutions fill schools with advertisements in order to attract potential customers. The university propaganda appears to have been successful: from teachers to counsellors to Career Days, everyone has told us that postsecondary is the only way to go.

The government, too, has encouraged this push towards academia—everyone, that is, but themselves.

Although this may appear to be a good thing, there's a darker side as well, as those university students who attend career fairs in high school, ace their diploma exams and take advanced placement courses are left with the pressure of becoming society's next doctors, pharmacists, lawyers and politicians.

There's only one way to avoid being a perpetual consumer in society, striving to pay off debts to the government and the university, and that's to drop out. Dropping out is an act of courage, and is definitely revolutionary. In order to quit, an individual has to defy society and find new ways to become successful.

Many famous people have dropped out of their postsecondary education: Woody Allen, Tom Hanks, Steven Spielberg, Bob Dylan, John Lennon—even entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. They managed to become successful, and all without a fancy, framed piece of paper.

After finding your motive for being in university, question whether it's worth your time and money. The summer can be used to reflect and to reconsider your options. The truth is that few people are strong enough to defy society. Most would rather sit back and be complacent, mindlessly writing exams while trying to please everyone from their parents to the university to potential employers—everyone, that is, but themselves.

Let's see some more transparency in APIRG audit



DANIEL KASZOR

for the organization until they've been appeased.

In the case of APIRG, they didn't submit their final audit until March 2006, almost half a year after it was due. Once they did submit it, the Audit Committee still withheld APIRG's DFU income, based on what they felt were irregularities in their budget.

While all of this was going on, APIRG's Chief Financial Officer resigned, and the organization teetered on the brink of insolvency. To top it all off, the chair of the Audit Committee said some nasty things about APIRG's money-management skills, comments that were promptly reported in the Gateway. Needless to say, this wasn't a happy time for APIRG.

Finally, they went to the de facto judicial body of the SU, the Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement (DIE) Board, to have a final ruling made. DIE Board ruled—correctly in my opinion—that Audit Committee had overstepped its bounds by withholding APIRG's levy, and that Audit Committee didn't have grounds to withhold the money. Since APIRG had a clean audit, they were allowed to keep their money.

Despite this, there are still many questions remaining regarding APIRG's finances. First of all, why

did it take so long for them to finally submit their audit? And what precipitated their money being moved from financial year to financial year? After all, this was part of the impetus for Audit Committee to withhold APIRG's money once its audit was in.

Additionally, there was also a general lack of communication that went on. For example, the "contingency reserve" APIRG was holding that raised the ire of Audit Committee probably wouldn't have been such a big deal if APIRG had made an effort to show the committee the purpose of this reserve, and to reassure them that the money was properly invested and not just sitting in a savings account somewhere.

I know this wasn't communicated to the Audit Committee because I was at the Council meeting when these complaints arose.

This lack of communication seems to suggest the notion that the SU shouldn't have any control over how APIRG spends its money. And while the actions of an overzealous audit committee don't do much to justify the SU having such control, I think that the general lack of transparency in response only added to the problem.

Hopefully, APIRG's next financial officer will make sure that the not-

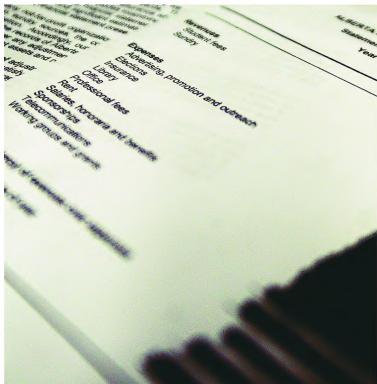


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: KRISTINA SULATYCKI

INTERESTING HIGHLIGHTER COLOUR Actually, you can view this audit online

for-profit group doesn't get screwed over like this again. They can start by making sure APIRG's finances aren't only managed correctly, but open for all the world to see.

Daniel Kaszor was last year's Gateway *Editor-in-Chief*. He currently sits on the Gateway's board of directors, which receives a DFU from students passed through the SU.

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SPORTS

Football Bears face early-season questions

ROSS PRUSAKOWSKI
Sports Staff

For the past few years, the Golden Bears football team has eased into the season with very few questions about who would occupy their key positions when football returned to the carpet at Foote Field. This season though, the roster, similar to that old, abused Astro turf which is being replaced this summer, faces a serious overhaul thanks to the departure of some prominent veterans.

Gone are former all-stars David Lowry, Andrew Gintner and Darryl Salmon. Standout running back Jarred Winkel and linebacker Neal Terrovatsky signed contracts with the Edmonton Eskimos after passing through the CFL College Draft and may not return to the Bears.

"I have no idea if Winkel and Terrovatsky will return to the fall," said Bears head coach Jerry Friesen. "If they're back, we'll be a better football team; if they're not, then we'll need to make sure we can fill in those spots."

While simply filling those spots might not be too hard for the team, finding players of the same quality right away could prove difficult. The departing players were among the first players brought in by Friesen to turn the Bears from laughing stock to powerhouse.

With only nine starters returning from last season's squad that went 8-1 before losing their third-straight bid for the Hardy Cup, it already looks like the 2006 edition of the Bears could suffer from some costly growing pains.

In particular, the unproven quarterback tandem of Quade Armstrong and Cam Linke will need to mature quickly to prevent the Bears from losing ground in CIS football.

"We will make sure that we surround our quarterbacks with a lot of tools, and make sure that they use them, so we can take the pressure off them," said Friesen. "With both [Linke] and [Armstrong] competing [for the starting job],



WEIYANG LIU
S0 MANY ARMS, SO LITTLE PLAYING TIME The departure of all-star Darryl Salmon has left the Bears with a gaping hole to be filled at quarterback.

we just need to get them some game experience to make them comfortable, because it's going to be their game experience that takes us to the next level as a team."

While the development of the quarterbacks could be the key in determining if the Bears can maintain their place among the elite in university football, the team will also need recruits to step directly into the lineup and make big contributions.

Running back Tenday Jozzy, offensive tackle Simon Rottier and linebacker Dan Bass Jr

are all skilled local recruits that turned heads during Alberta's spring camp and showed that they could be ready to start in October. Add in BC products Matt Chapelaine and Bobby Rau—both of whom committed to the U of A over their local schools because they would be given the opportunity to step in and play right away—and Alberta might weather their roster overhaul better than was suspected at the end of last season.

The quality of the recruits that have signed on to play for the Bears, along with their success in

recent years and the record of accomplishment posted by University of Alberta teams in the CIS could mean that the team faces unreal expectations, something Friesen accepts and hopes his team will embrace when they open training camp for the new season in mid-August.

"Pressure means that there's interest and we want to have everybody interested, and if that creates pressure for the team to win, that's fine," said Friesen. "We want to make sure that we have an opportunity to challenge, being conference champions and national champions."

Defence set to play bigger role for Bears this season



ROBIN COLLUM
Sports Staff

After many seasons of being overshadowed by the high-powered offence, the Bears' defence is poised to build on their success of last year and carry the load for an Alberta football team facing numerous question marks on the offensive side of the ball.

Much of the success in recent years of the Golden Bears has come from Darryl Salmon's arm, Jarred Winkel's legs and Andrew Gintner's hands, but the 2005 season was a different story. While at times they were dominant, the Bears offence also experienced severe falls throughout the season and only ended up fourth in the conference in yards per game.

With the pressure on, the defence posted the second-best points-against average in Canada West, and helped the Bears put up a conference-best plus-15 turnover ratio over the season. Four of the 13 conference defensive all-stars were from the Bears.

Though they might have lost linebackers David Lowry—the Canada West nominee for the President's Trophy, presented to the outstanding defensive player in the country excluding down linemen—and Neal Terrovatsky and all-star defensive lineman Darren Balkerson, the Bears will have most of their starters return and have added some promising new recruits. In addition, the Bears have shifted the focus of their coaching to reflect the added onus that has been placed on the defence.

Bears head coach Jerry Friesen wants the defence to work to make the whole team more dynamic.

"One of the results of our evaluation process during the off-season was deciding that we want to become more aggressive in our defence."

JERRY FRIESEN
BEARS FOOTBALL HEAD COACH

GIVE ME BACK MY JERSEY FOO' The Bears are hoping for more from their defence this season.

"Draudson brings a new perspective to the side and a more aggressive style," said Friesen. "Roberts has a lot of technical expertise."

To replace the lost linebackers, Sherwood Park native Dan Bass Jr has returned from Northern Michigan University. He will join Ryan Michalek, seventh in the conference in tackles, in the middle of the field. The defensive backfield also looks strong with the country's top safety Jason Milne and all-star halfback Stephen Boyko.

While the question marks loom on the offensive side of the ball, the defence seems ready for a breakout season.

Battle in Heaven a little closer to Hell

Battle in Heaven

Directed by Carlos Reygadas
Starring Marcos Hernández, Anapola Mushkadić,
and Bertha Ruiz
19-22 May at 9pm
Metro Cinema

EDMON ROTEA
Arts & Entertainment Staff

These days, the majority of so-called foreign "art house" films fall into one of two categories. The first includes films whose directors take an unorthodox approach to conventional filmmaking. These films can be wholly creative, colourful and cutting edge—with films like *Run Lola Run*, *Amélie*, and *City of God* literally leaving North American audiences speechless. The second category includes films that are dark, strange and rich with frontal nudity and raw sex scenes—the kind of late-night borderline pornography that you might find on Showcase.

Unfortunately, Carlos Reygadas' *Battle In Heaven* falls into the second category. While the film has its moments of dark humour and weirdness, the opening scene is entirely subject to interpretation. In this scene, viewers are introduced to a spectacle: middle-aged, overweight man named Marcos (played by an actor of the same first name, Marcos Hernández). Marcos is standing naked against a sterile white background while the camera pans down to showcase his flaccid male breasts, love handles, beer gut and the head of his dreadlocked-haired lover Ana (Anapola Mushkadić)—a teenage girl who would rather give than receive.

While the opening fellatio scene may be a mouthful for most North American audiences to swallow, it certainly sets the precedent for the rest of the film. Like Ana's recreational pursuits, this film both blows and sucks.

Set in modern day Mexico City, Marcos is a flag bearer and a humble chauffeur for a wealthy Mexican general. Every night, Marcos goes about his mundane and routine duty as he watches the



unraveling and erection of a huge Mexican flag in the heart of the city's downtown. Initially, Marcos may seem quiet, content and passive, but viewers will later discover that he's a man rife with internal conflict, discontent and frustration.

Marcos is also aware of a dark secret: the general's daughter, Ana, leads a double life as a seedy brothel worker. Yet, Marcos harbours his own tragic secret. Earlier, Marcos and his wife kidnapped an infant for ransom, but the baby died in their custody.

In an act of personal relief and desperation, Marcos reveals his secret to Ana, and soon their exchange of secrets erupts into an intimate relationship. But as the police close-in on Marcos, Ana urges him to give himself up to the authorities. Instead, Marcos chooses to seek redemption and give himself up to a higher power.

Despite *Battle In Heaven's* interesting and

unique approach, the film fails in delivery. To the unassuming viewer, the film lacks narrative, plot and character development. Those who watch the film, without having read the plot synopsis or any idea about what the film is about, may be greeted with confusion and frustration when they finally watch the film.

Many of the characters, including Marcos himself, have very limited speaking roles.

While director Reygadas takes an experimental approach to filmmaking—paying little attention to narrative in the hopes of making the film more visually accessible to viewers—the result is a plot-less film that's both empty and unfilling.

The same applies to the cinematography. While the sex scenes are unlike those seen in any Hollywood film, they're too long, boring and unnecessary—even disturbing to watch. Unlike the conventional Hollywood sex scene that

features two relatively attractive actors engaging in passionate love-making, *Battle In Heaven* does the opposite: viewers get to witness a middle-age, overweight and unattractive couple going about the deed doggy-style. Perhaps Reygadas is aiming for realism in his film, even at the expense of alienating his audience.

In addition, the panoramic views of Mexico City and its people are too prolonged and pointless, and the film is littered with dozens of half-minute close-ups shots of objects or people, which serve little to no role, especially the lengthy close-up shots of the actors' genitalia.

Depending on one's sexual orientation, the film's only redeeming quality is the sight of actress Anapola Mushkadić's beautiful naked body. While Mushkadić's on-screen presence may be a turn-on for some viewers, watching *Battle In Heaven* will be a major turn-off.

No reservations Spared in unflinching medieval production

One Flea Spare

Directed by Andrea Boyd
Written by Naomi Wallace
Starring Sandy Nicholls, John Wright, Clarice Eckford, Damon Dolynski and Clinton Carew
18-27 May
Studio Theatre

MATT FREHNER
Editor-in-Chief

One Flea Spare takes its name from a John Donne poem, *The Flea*, in which a man compares making love with his mistress to the mingling of their blood inside the stomach of a flea.

This raw, base approach to sexuality is indicative of the thematic approach in *One Flea Spare*, the final play of Studio Theatre's season, and the thesis project for MFA directing student Andrea Boyd.

With the bubonic plague as a backdrop, the play takes aim at the sexual and social inequalities pervasive at the time, attitudes that the play's characters—an unfortunate couple trapped in a decaying downtown London, along with a servant-class sailor, a watchman and a twelve-year-old girl—have little hope of changing, even as the world collapses around them. Yet, as the desperate circumstances begin to dissolve the characters' conventional beliefs, shown explicitly through the way they evolve sexually.

Paradoxically, the play's freshness comes largely from its almost-ancient setting. "It's set in 1665 London, during the plague, in order to set up a situation in which the world is in a total upheaval," says Boyd.

"In that almost apocalyptic setting, the world

still has a possibility of changing," she continues. "It is contemporary in its message because we still have class and gender oppression, and that has got to change."

Playwright Naomi Wallace is famous for her unconventional and unflinching approach to sex. With *One Flea Spare*, she takes on topics like paedophilia with casual but disturbing dialogue. In one particular scene, she subtly evaluates her characters' gender roles when Bunce, a lower-class sailor, has his stomach wound penetrated by the hand of an older woman.

But there's no explicit love-making or, conversely, no Hollywood romance here. "In the sexiest scene, everybody is still clothed," says Boyd. "For Naomi Wallace, sex and sexuality in all of its forms is not inherently good or bad, and I think that comes across quite beautifully in this play. The scenes between the young sailor and the older, wealthy woman are just beautiful," continues Boyd. "It's about transformation and it's about living life, and not about a thing that's 'wrong.'"

To faithfully present such delicate subject matter, an able cast is crucial, something Boyd hopes to have achieved even with a clear disparity in her actors' experience—*One Flea Spare* sees stage veteran Tom Wright paired at times with up-and-comer Clarice Eckford. The range in experience, though difficult at times, is a challenge Boyd welcomes. "All five of my actors have completely different processes. It has been fascinating."

Along with her cast, Boyd sees Wallace's script, in its quick beats and poetic movements, as enabling the audience to gain something substantial from subject matter that's often tritely represented.

"They'll be surprised by what moves them,



OF FLEAS AND MEN *One Flea Spare* is an unconventional look at sexual and social inequalities

about their responses to the play itself, and about our own society, and where the class and gender oppression exists and how we can try to change that," Boyd says.

"As I was researching the play, hurricane Katrina happened. And in terms of the plague, it is exactly the same thing," she remarks. "The poor stayed and the rich got out, and that's the same today."

An empire of music converted

Juno-nominated punk rockers The Constantines take a byzantine approach to their craft



The Constantines

with Chet VanGorder and Blood Meridian
Sunday, 21 May
Starlite Room

MICHAEL LIU
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Being one of this country's up-and-coming punk rock bands, The Constantines fulfill the Canadian stereotype of nice, down-to-Earth people who love curling and outdoor folk festivals.

"I love hippies. That's why I love the folk festivals so much," Bryan Webb, the band's lead guitarist and vocalist laughs. "I mean I'm a hippie on paper. I grew up with punk, so I was inclined to be aversive to be the hippie thing. But I think I've realized in the last couple of years I'm pretty much half-punk, half-hippie; as much hippie as I am punk."

If you've any Canadian campus radio, you've likely heard at least a snippet of The Constantines. An addition to earning a nomination for Best

Alternative Album at the 1999 Canadian Juno Music Awards, the band's first album nearly broke the record for the longest-charting release on campus radio history.

With their 2005 release, *Tournament of Hearts*, the band charted a different game plan than before. There was a "hands-off" approach to the songs as a result of artistic maturity and new collaborations, for which Webb, the band's lead guitarist and vocalist, is ultimately grateful.

"I feel it's a bit more grown up," chuckles Webb. "Jeff McMurchie, the [producer] who engineered it, is incredible at putting sounds to tape. He knows how to get pure sounds without manipulating them too much."

As for its content, *Tournament of Hearts* continues to celebrate the everyday and mundane. It's a tribute to the working person's search for meaning in work and in society. The reconciliation of one's productivity versus one's personal fulfillment has been a recurring motif over the years. "Good Nurse," for instance, is based

on Webb's mother, an emergency room nurse with nearly 30 years of experience.

The sincerity that The Constantines bring to these issues has earned them a "workmanlike" reputation, though Webb downplays the validity of such an image. "I don't think we're entirely earnest," Webb explains. "I think we get that reputation a lot, but I think there's a lot of irony and inside jokes."

As for his time on the road, Webb is could fill entire interviews with stories of his favourite venues.

Among the most memorable was Lecce, located on the southern shore of Italy where the band played in an open country field and stayed in an abandoned farmhouse that had been converted to a country hotel.

"It had this beautiful courtyard and dogs running around and olive trees as far as the eye can see everywhere," he recalls. "It was just paradise, so we stayed there a couple of nights. Actually, maybe it was just one night, but it felt like we slowed down enough that we were there for a week."

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